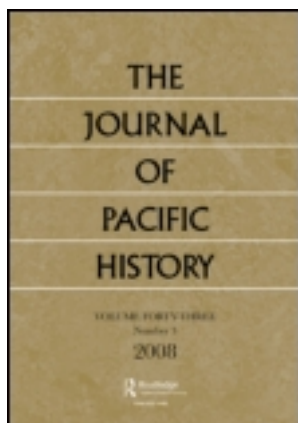


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Melanesian Mission Place Names on Norfolk Island

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NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

Melanesian Mission Place Names on Norfolk Island

Melanesian Mission, founded by the Anglican Church in New Zealand to evangelise the peoples of Island Melanesia, was headquartered in the southwestern region of Norfolk Island from 1867 to 1920 (Figure 1). Students came to this small island – more than seventeen hundred kilometres from Sydney and over one thousand kilometres from Auckland – from various language groups in what are now the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. This paper investigates the possible influence of the mission's lingua franca, Mota (an indigenous language from the Banks Islands in what is today Vanuatu), and any other Melanesian languages spoken at the mission on Norfolk Island's linguistic landscape.¹ The social history and structure of the mission have been chronicled elsewhere,² and the role of the languages spoken at the mission station and its language policy have previously been detailed.³ For these reasons, the focus here is on mission place-naming, specifically mission place names and house names gathered from documentary sources and collected during fieldwork on the island. The discussion extends previous research about the influence of the mission on Norfolk Island's cultural history.⁴

The Melanesian Mission's evangelical strategy can be considered 'extractionist' – 'to educate a small number of Melanesians away from their

Acknowledgements: This paper is based on a presentation entitled 'Place-naming of the Melanesian Mission on Norfolk Island, South Pacific' given on 22 July 2010 at the Islands of History Conference on Norfolk Island and also on research submitted as part of a doctoral dissertation in June 2011. The author would like to thank Peter Mühlhäusler for feedback and suggestions on earlier versions of this paper and Paul Monaghan for reading a shorter version at the Norfolk Island conference. The author acknowledges the generous help and advice offered by executive editor Vicki Luker and editorial assistant Brett Baker as well as by the anonymous reviewers.

¹ For an introduction to the concept of 'linguistic landscape', see Rodrigue Landry and Richard Y. Bourhis, 'Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality: an empirical study', *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 16:1 (1997), 23–49.

² The major works dealing with the history of the mission in Melanesia and New Zealand and on Norfolk Island include Stuart W. Artless (ed.), *The Church in Melanesia* (London 1936); Charles E. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles: being the story of the Anglican Mission in Melanesia, 1849–1949* (London 1958); Charles E. Fox, *Kakamora* (London 1962); David Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen: a history of the Melanesian Mission, 1849–1942* (St Lucia 1978); Merval Hoare, *Norfolk Island: a revised and enlarged history 1774–1998* (Rockhampton 1999); H.H. Montgomery, *The Light of Melanesia: a record of fifty years' mission work in the South Seas* (New York 1904); Cecil Wilson, *The Wake of the Southern Cross: work and adventures in the South Seas* (London 1932).

³ For an account of missionary language policy and language planning on Norfolk Island, see Peter Mühlhäusler, 'The College of St Barnabas on Norfolk Island and its languages: an early example of missionary language planning', *Language & Communication*, 30 (2010), 225–39.

⁴ Raymond Nobbs, *Norfolk Island and Its Third Settlement: the first hundred years: the Pitcairn Era, 1856–1956 and the Melanesian Mission, 1866–1920* (Sydney 2006).



FIGURE 1: Map of Norfolk Island showing Melanesian Mission Station.

Source: M.V. Murphy, *Map of Norfolk Island showing grants and subdivisions* (Sydney 1900), available <http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/12990178>.

homeland and thus build a nucleus of indigenous clergy who would spread Christianity in their own islands'.⁵ The mission school was originally located in Kohimarama, New Zealand, but the climate there proved too cold and harsh for the Melanesian students. The Anglican Bishop of New Zealand, George Augustus Selwyn, nevertheless remained ambitious for the mission's work in Christianising the southwest Pacific, and several attempts were made in the 1860s to acquire land on Norfolk Island, where the climate would be gentler for the scholars. Although centuries earlier Norfolk Island had been briefly settled by East Polynesians, it was uninhabited when the colony of New South Wales established a penal settlement there from 1788 to 1814 and again from 1825 to 1855. Queen Victoria then awarded the island to some two hundred descendants of the *Bounty* mutineers, men and women of mixed British and Polynesian ancestry who, in 1856, relocated to Norfolk Island from Pitcairn Island over eight thousand kilometres away. The mission's initial efforts to acquire land on Norfolk were countered by the governor of New South Wales, Sir William Denison, partly because he 'smelt the threat of "ecclesiastical tyranny"' over the

⁵ Peter Mühlhäusler, 'Pidgin English and the Melanesian Mission', *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages*, 17:2 (2002), 238.

resident Pitcairners.⁶ But in 1864, after the mission had considered Curtis Island off the coast of Queensland as a possible site,⁷ Denison's successor, Sir John Young, offered it land on Norfolk Island. John Coleridge Patteson, the Melanesian Mission's first bishop, accepted. He saw the opportunity for the mission simultaneously to improve the Pitcairners' condition.⁸ So in choosing Norfolk Island, the mission added to its primary goal of training Melanesians so that they could return to their native places and spread Christianity, 'moral influence and good example',⁹ the secondary goal of dealing with the Pitcairners.

The lush mission grounds – still known today on Norfolk Island as 'Out ar Mission', 'Out Mission' or 'The Mission' – resembled an English village. The scene was especially attractive to the clergy and mission administrators brought in from afar:

In 1867 St Barnabas College comprised two houses with broad verandahs, situated just below Mt Pitt. One was the bishop's house, containing a chapel, and the other a home for the staff and scholars. Cattle, especially imported from New Zealand, grazed nearby, and the whole scene must have been one of peaceful industry.¹⁰

Up to two hundred Melanesians were educated at the boarding school at any one time. From the start, their diverse linguistic backgrounds posed the mission with the challenge of deciding on a language of instruction. Coombe described the problem as follows:

Every island, no matter how small, speaks a language of its own. Indeed, the larger islands have two or three languages a-piece, so those living on one side cannot always understand their opposite neighbours. In the old days, when the two sides were hardly ever at peace, this didn't matter so much. But how are boys and girls speaking, say, thirty different languages to be taught in one school?¹¹

A reason why Mota came to be selected – although it was only one of many possibilities and was originally spoken only by the inhabitants of Mota, a small island in the Banks Group – was that a significant number of the first scholars came from Mota. Although the language served as the mission's official *lingua franca* for half a century, the policy was effectively abandoned when the mission shifted from Norfolk Island in 1920.¹²

Islanders involved in the initial establishment of the mission had also interacted with seafarers and sandalwood traders in the Pacific and most likely spoke or were, to a greater or lesser extent, familiar with one or more varieties

⁶ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 24.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 35. A century later, Curtis Island was mooted as a possible site to which the population of Nauru could relocate. See Gil Marvel Tabucanon and Brian Opeskin, 'The resettlement of Nauruans in Australia: an early case of failed environmental migration', *The Journal of Pacific History*, 46 (2011), 337–57.

⁸ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 35.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰ Hoare, *Norfolk Island*, 89.

¹¹ Florence Coombe, Notebook on Motu Phrases, 1906, Melanesian Mission 6/16, box 32, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; Florence Coombe, *School-days in Norfolk Island* (London 1909), 19.

¹² For an account of the mission's language policy, see Mühlhäusler, 'The college of St Barnabas'.

of Melanesian Pidgin English common in trade and navigation at that time.¹³ The mission's resident linguist, Robert Henry Codrington – Oxford-educated, the acknowledged expert on Melanesian languages and grammar at the time, and indeed a fine philologist and lover of languages – remarked:

The English now introduced and used by traders in these [Melanesian] islands is something curious. A native who knows it cannot understand real English at all, and I on the other hand can't understand him to speak the jargon [sic]. It is a wretched childish stuff, and degrading to people who have a real language.¹⁴

Elsewhere he wrote:

I have heard it commonly called Pigeon [sic] English after the jargon spoken in China. I don't understand how anyone can deny that there is such a language, but it seems to me that Mr Layward [in a letter to Schuhardt] in Nouméa has much exaggerated the importance of it. While he appears to limit it far too closely, I have never had any occasion for using this jargon myself, in fact I always discourage it; but I have not been indifferent to it, and I have endeavoured to get pure specimens from Queensland without success.¹⁵

This familiarity with Pidgin contributed to the use of English and Pidgin among the students. Although Codrington never made a study of Pidgin on the mission (nor of the language Norf'k spoken by the Pitcairners, which combined features of English, Tahitian and St Kitts creole),¹⁶ he noted:

On Norfolk Island boys say they have heard five kinds of English, 1 what we [the clergymen] speak, 2, the Carpenter's, a North Country man whose accent they perceive to be different, 3 the Norfolk Islander's [sic], 4 the language of the sea i.e. whaler's talk and sailors jargon words towards natives, 5 The Sydney Language which is now brought here, that originated in relations between colonists and Australian blacks.¹⁷

While a unique school language became established incorporating English terms – Coombe observed that 'the words of civilisation which cannot be put into Motu [sic], we keep in English'¹⁸ – Mühlhäusler concludes that 'it seems inevitable that Pidgin English was one of the languages for intercommunication

¹³ For contemporary descriptions of trading behaviour and language use in Melanesian trade, see Andrew Cheyne, *A Description of Islands in the Western Pacific Ocean, North and South of the Equator: with sailing directions: together with their productions, manners and customs of the natives, and vocabularies of their various languages* (London 1852).

¹⁴ Robert Codrington to Tom Codrington, n.d., Journal and Letters (Reel M994), Letters 4, Dec. 1872–1881, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.

¹⁵ R.H. Codrington to Hugo Schuhardt, Oxford, 10 Jan. 1884, item 01651, Schuhardt Archives, Graz, Austria.

¹⁶ In this paper, I use the language name 'Norf'k' when describing the speech of the Pitcairn descendants. Norf'k can be posed as a contact language. Known also as 'Pitcairner English', 'Norfolk' and 'Norfolkese', the language has had a very vexed history. Norf'k was claimed not to exist and was socially ridiculed. Several interventions, not the least being the education system on the island, attempted to eradicate it. The Norf'k language was finally given recognition and a name with the introduction of the *Norfolk Island Language (Norf'k) Bill* (Norfolk Island 2004). For further details on Norf'k and its linguistic and cultural role in Norfolk society, see Donald C. Laycock, 'The status of Pitcairn-Norfolk: creole, dialect, or cant?' in Ulrich Ammon (ed.), *Status and Function of Languages and Language Varieties* (New York 1989), 608–29. See also Shirley Harrison, 'The social setting of Norfolk speech' *English World-Wide*, 6:1 (1985), 131–53.

¹⁷ Robert Codrington to Tom Codrington, n.d.

¹⁸ Coombe, *School-days*, 37.

at the boarding school of Norfolk Island but I have yet to find direct evidence'.¹⁹ The mission clearly influenced the language still used on Norfolk Island today, as indicated by the following examples:

1. *Buss wargus, wargus*, 'big and ugly fellow', possibly related to Wargus, nickname for Menges/Menzies, the mission printer.
2. *Capsize*, 'to overturn, to pour into'; the second meaning may have been introduced into Norf'k through contact between the Pitcairners and speakers of the Melanesian Pidgin English at the mission.²⁰

Mühlhäusler specifically lists *walkstil* (to creep), *mekies* (to hurry, make haste) and *manabus* (exclamation of astonishment, gee! man!), among others, as words of Pidgin English origin in Norf'k.²¹ So Pidgin English was probably also spoken on the mission despite the opposition of missionaries to its use.

Thus many languages had potential for contact on Norfolk Island during the mission period. The *Supplement to the Church Gazette of the Melanesian Mission* of March 1875 lists the origins of the 173 students present on the mission at that time. No fewer than 18 different locations and hence distinct languages were named. Students had come from New Hebrides, the Banks Islands and the Solomons – islands which the missionaries described as being 'separated by speech and distance' from each other.²² At any one time, mission residents spoke up to 27 different languages.²³ Yet the major languages in contact during the mission's presence on Norfolk Island were Mota, Pidgin English, Norf'k and English. English must have been the medium for many public and private dealings between the Pitcairners and the mission population. As long as English was an effective means of communication with the mission population, mission clergy or inmates would have had little reason to learn Norf'k, while Norf'k speakers would have had even less need to learn Pidgin English or Mota.

The Pitcairners felt some bitterness toward the mission, its clergy and scholars.²⁴ Pitcairners living in the former convict settlement at Kingston, five kilometres distant, were outwardly friendly, but inwardly they resented the high-handed manner in which the New South Wales colonial government had granted and sold to the mission some four hundred hectares that they insisted was theirs in perpetuity by royal donation. The grievance was never forgotten.²⁵ Their dislike of the dark-coloured Melanesians is evidenced in some Norf'k expressions such as *blacksmell* ('to smell like a Mission boy').²⁶ Inter-marriage,

¹⁹ Mühlhäusler, 'Pidgin English', 242.

²⁰ Robert A. Hall, 'The vocabulary of Melanesian Pidgin English', *American Speech*, 18:3 (1943), 196.

²¹ P. Mühlhäusler 'Norfolk Island and Pitcairn varieties', in Daniel Schreier, Peter Trudgill, Edgar W. Schneider and Jeffrey P. Williams (eds), *The Lesser-Known Varieties of English: an introduction* (Cambridge 2010), 350.

²² *Supplement to the Church Gazette of the Melanesian Mission* (March 1875), 3.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 35; J.A. Nimmo, *Report of the Royal Commission into Matters relating to Norfolk Island* (Canberra 1976), 30.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

²⁶ Alice Buffett, *Speak Norfolk Today: an encyclopedia of the Norfolk Island language* (Norfolk Island 1999), 17.

however, eventually occurred between certain non-mission families and mission members. The Bailey, Menzies and Taylor families, and possibly others, married and had children with former mission students. Mission personal names also seem to have influenced Norfolk Island residents' names, with a 1920 list showing 'Archibald Selwyn Quintal', 'John Selwyn Robinson' and a misspelling of 'Patteson', memorialising Bishop Patteson, in the name 'John Patterson Quintal'.²⁷ The Reverend C.C. Elcum 'wrote glowingly of the [Norfolk] islanders' hospitality',²⁸ which suggests the absence of overt dissension, while bilingual services – in Mota (for the Melanesians) and English (for Pitcairners) – were presumably held at St Barnabas Chapel if the latter were present.²⁹

But how did these two groups share each other's place-knowledge, how was this knowledge distributed, and how, if in any way, was this knowledge documented? More specifically, what Mota or Pidgin English place names associated with the mission are still used or remembered or can be retrieved from documentary sources? And how do they contribute to a better understanding of the history of place-naming on Norfolk Island and a history of the mission?

It can be shown that Mota was used in place-naming on the mission with names such as 'Valis we poa' (Big Grass) and 'Alalang paen' (Under the Pines).³⁰ And Norfolk Island itself was reportedly known in Mota as 'Novo Kailana',³¹ which at first glance might appear to be a sentimental reminder of faraway Polynesia, compounding Latin *novo* with *kailana*, meaning sky or sea in Hawaiian. More likely, 'Novo Kailana' is a phonotactic adaptation in Mota of 'Norfolk Island':

1. Norfolk Island → Nofok Ailan – cluster simplification
2. Nofok Ailan → Nofo Kailan – resyllabification
3. Nofo Kailan → Novo Kailana – consonant-vowel syllable adjustment

But questions remain: to what extent was Mota used? And did the mission endow any Pidgin English place names?

St Barnabas Chapel is the most obvious extant example of Melanesian Mission place-naming:

The Melanesian Mission has left one substantial monument in the Patteson Memorial Chapel of St. Barnabas. The chapel, built of stone and timber in a colonial Gothic style, with a detached, rustic-looking belfry, is surprisingly ornate in its detail, largely as a result of the funds raised back in England to commemorate

²⁷ *Stewart's Handbook of the Pacific Islands: a reliable guide to all the inhabited islands of the Pacific Ocean for traders, tourists and settlers* (Sydney 1921), 84–85.

²⁸ Hoare, *Norfolk Island*, 90.

²⁹ This is a supposition based on the fact that services exclusively for the mission were always given in Mota: 'Mota was adopted as the official teaching language of the mission'. Nobbs, *Norfolk Island*, 102. Nevertheless, 'visitors and Norfolk Islanders, as well as missionaries and scholars, attended the [St Barnabas Chapel inauguration] ceremony', suggesting that the language used at this ceremony would have been English. Hoare, *Norfolk Island*, 90.

³⁰ Coombe, *School-days*, 47, 62.

³¹ C.H. Brooke, *Mission Life*, 3:1 (1872), 13.

Bishop Patteson, proclaimed as a martyr after his killing in the Solomons in 1871. Particularly notable are the recently restored stained glass windows attributed to Sir Edward Burne-Jones. With the departure of the Mission in 1920, the chapel was absorbed into the parish of Norfolk Island.³²

Although it was originally named by the mission, the Pitcairners also came to use the name of St Barnabas:

I found out our Pitcairn friends had given the name of St. Barnabas to the Mission station, and very willingly adopted it. Miss Yonge [Patteson's cousin] will forgive us for not naming our school after the old one at Kohimarama [the name of the training college built at Mission Bay, Auckland], according to our first intention.³³

Other place names were identified from documentary sources at the Norfolk Island Museum, primarily digital copies of the diaries of Julia Farr, a missionary from South Australia who worked on the mission in the 1890s;³⁴ various maps compiled by local Norfolk Islanders in the 1980s, which were accessed during fieldwork; and a compilation of island place names published previously.³⁵ Interviews also confirmed the existence and location of several place names. Names derived from Julia Farr's diaries were compared with verbal sources and handwritten maps, such as the example presented in Figure 2. A list of Mota and English place names and house names on the mission grounds as well as in surrounding areas was compiled. Additional data relating to house signage, which indicates the possible influence of Mota and other Melanesian languages, was collected on several fieldtrips in 2008 and 2009.

Figure 2 shows an example of the extent of mapped documentation in private possession in the Norfolk Island community about mission place names:³⁶

Descriptors and descriptive names, such as 'sports field', 'White Oak' and 'St Barnabas' provide little new data about what was named and the motivations

³² John Rickard, 'Norfolk Island', *Australian Historical Studies*, 26:104 (1995), 483. Bishop Patteson was killed 20 Sept. 1871 on Nukapu, an islet in what presently is the Vaeakau district of the Temotu province of the Solomon Islands. On this event and the memorial chapel, see David Hilliard, 'The making of an Anglican martyr: Bishop John Coleridge Patteson of Melanesia', in Diana Wood (ed.), *Martyrs and Martyrologies: papers read at the 1992 summer meeting and the 1993 winter meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Oxford 1993), 333–45. For other details and explanations about the killing of Patteson, see Thorgeir Kolshus and Even Hovdhaugen, 'Reassessing the death of Bishop John Coleridge Patteson', *The Journal of Pacific History*, 45:3 (2010), 331–55. The mission had already adopted St Barnabas as its own saint, and as early as the 1850s the mission's supporters in England had met on his feast day, 11 June. The dedication of the chapel to St Barnabas and the date of its consecration on 11 June reflected this existing connection.

³³ *Report of the Melanesian Mission for the Year 1867*, 2. J.C. Patteson wrote this report but was not named as author.

³⁴ Hard copies of Julia Farr's diaries for her time on Norfolk Island are kept at the Norfolk Island Museum, Guard House, bay 2.2 (hereinafter NIM). The museum also keeps electronic file transcripts of 13 volumes of her diary (1894–1899). Both sources were consulted.

³⁵ Mühlhäusler, 'Changing names for a changing landscape – the case of Norfolk Island', *English World-Wide*, 23:1 (2002), 75–78. This research has added substantially to Mühlhäusler's list by consulting Julia Farr's diaries (see fn. above) and the Moresby Buffett handwritten map of Norfolk Island (c. 1980) in possession of the Buffett family, Norfolk Island. This map shows the names and locations of several mission place names (Fig. 2).

³⁶ Moresby Buffett, hand-drawn map (c. 1980) of Norfolk Island in possession of the Buffett family, Norfolk Island, showing several mission place names.



FIGURE 2: Map showing Melanesian Mission area c. 1890.
Source: M. Buffett, Map of Norfolk Island n.d. [c. 1980].

behind mission place-naming. Eponymous boys' dormitory house names such as 'Codrington',³⁷ 'Patteson' and 'Williams',³⁸ are unusual as the mission was generally in the habit of naming places in honour of people posthumously. This tendency contrasts with a common system of naming houses on Norfolk Island to designate the current occupants of the house or area (see examples in Table 1); these names often take the typical Norf'k house name form of Proper Noun + Possessive.³⁹

On the mission, however, few place names exist that incorporate proper nouns and possessives. The exceptions include boarding-house names, which use

³⁷ On Codrington's work as a missionary and a linguist, see Allan K. Davidson, 'The legacy of Henry Robert Codrington', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 27:4 (2003), 171–76; Mühlhäusler, 'Pidgin English', 244–49.

³⁸ The name of this house can almost certainly be attributed to the missionary Percy Temple Williams, who served on the mission between 1895 and 1905. Williams also taught at the Norfolk Island School from 1904 to 1905.

³⁹ Joshua Nash, 'Insular toponymics: pristine place-naming on Norfolk Island, South Pacific and Dudley Peninsula, Kangaroo Island, South Australia', PhD thesis, University of Adelaide (Adelaide 2011), 118, 123.

TABLE 1. Place names associated with the Melanesian Mission on Norfolk Island

Name	Category	History
1. Alalang Paen	Place name	Meaning 'under the pines' in Mota, this name is derived from the fact that a clump of Norfolk Island pines overshadows the mission quarters where the married couples lived. ⁴⁰
2. Big House	House name	Descriptive name for a boys' boarding-house.
3. Bishop's Court	House name	This building is reputed to have been the residence of the Bishop of Melanesia. It is situated on Headstone Road near the junction with Anson Bay Road by St Barnabas Chapel.
4. Codrington	House name	Eponymous term for a boys' boarding-house named after the resident missionary-linguist, Robert Henry Codrington.
5. Cornish's	House name	This place, most likely referring to a house, is named after Harry 'Cornish' Quintal. Julia Farr refers to it in her diaries as a place where she would walk. It is either on or near the mission grounds. ⁴¹
6. Geare Pere	Place name	'Geare' means 'bottom' or 'under the valley' in Mota. In this context 'pere' means 'place of big or scarred rocks.'
7. Kerapai, The	Place name	According to Buffett's map, ⁴² this place is located in the same area as Mission Pool on the mission property, just near Anson Bay Road. It means 'big tree' or 'valley' in Mota.
8. Novo Kailana	Place name	Norfolk Island was called Novo Kailana by the Melanesians. ⁴³ This name conforms to Mota phonotactics.
9. Palpaltate Vat	Place name	In Julia Farr's diaries, ⁴⁴ these descriptions refer to a beautiful place in the shape of a horseshoe with a little creek running to the dam with lots of rocks around. Based on this description, it appears this is the Mota name for either Cockpit, on the island's north coast, or Ball Bay, the low-lying area in Norfolk Island's southeast.
10. Patteson	House name	Eponymous term for a boys' boarding-house named after Bishop Patteson.
11. St Barnabas Chapel	Place name	Built as a memorial to Bishop Patteson, who was killed in what are now the Solomon Islands in 1871. The name of the chapel commemorates St Barnabas on whose feast day (11 June) the chapel was consecrated.
12. Sul	Place name	The area on the mission land where the small children lived. The name means 'people' in Mota.
13. Valis we Poa	Place name	"'Big Grass'" is the name of our grand old meadow, dotted with pines and lemons, and white-oaks, and stretching right away to the cliff. ⁴⁵
14. Vanua	Place name	This area was designated the central meeting area on the mission. It means 'land' or 'living area' in Mota but occurs in many Austronesian languages.
15. Williams	House name	An eponymous name most likely memorialising one of the clergymen at the mission.

⁴⁰ Julia Farr diary, 15 Nov. 1894, vol. 4, 87, NIM.

⁴¹ Julia Farr diary, 30 Jan. 1898, vol. 11, 68, NIM.

⁴² Buffett, map.

⁴³ Brooke, *Mission Life*, 13.

⁴⁴ Julia Farr diary, 15 Sept. 1898, vol. 10, 93, NIM.

⁴⁵ Coombe, *School-days*, 47.

TABLE 2. Residual place names associated with the Melanesian Mission

Name	Category	History
1. Selwyn Pine Road	Road	Possibly memorialises Bishop Selwyn, the first Bishop of New Zealand and founder of the Melanesian Mission in 1849, but the name more likely refers to G.A. Selwyn's son J.R., who lived on Norfolk Island during his time on the mission between 1873 and 1891. ⁴⁶
2. Selwyn Pine Reserve	Place name	A public reserve located to the north of the original Melanesian Mission area just south of Anson bay.
3. Selwyn Bridge	Bridge	A bridge in the northern area of the original mission lands. 'Very little of the original bridge survives as most of it was washed away in 1936. The embankments may date to 1888, when the bridge was constructed.' ⁴⁷
4. Bishop Pattenon Road	Road	This road was part of the Melanesian Mission lands. It was recommended in 2008 that the road be named after the First Bishop of Melanesia in honour of his martyrdom.
5. Taylors Road	Road	The road running from Arthurs Vale area near Kingston in the island's south up to the commercial centre of Burnt Pine. It memorialises the family associated with the mission. ⁴⁸
6. Mission Road	Road	The road which currently runs through the middle of the former mission land.

a colonial-type commemorative system similar to the Norf'k system of incorporating proper nouns and possessives. Place names attributed to events, common in Norf'k place names, do not occur, nor are there any place names memorialising people, which are common in English colonial place names on Norfolk Island, such as 'Duncombe Bay' and 'Point Hunter'. Other names describe topography and some of the social aspects of the area; for example, Sul (meaning 'people' in Mota) indicates where the children lived, and Alalang Paen (Mota for 'under the pines') signifies a group of trees.

Table 2 lists place names associated with the Melanesian Mission that are located elsewhere on Norfolk Island. Many of these place names were derived from prominent people. The influence of Bishops G.A. Selwyn and John Coleridge Pattenon on missionisation in the Pacific is remembered in Norfolk Island place names. The combined mission place name and location data is presented cartographically in Figure 3.

⁴⁶ For historical details on J.R. Selwyn, see biographical notes in Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 301.

⁴⁷ Robert V.J. Varman, *Survey Study of the First, Second and Third Settlements on Norfolk Island* (Canberra 1984), 305.

⁴⁸ For a detailed account of families associated with the mission, see *ibid.*, 308.

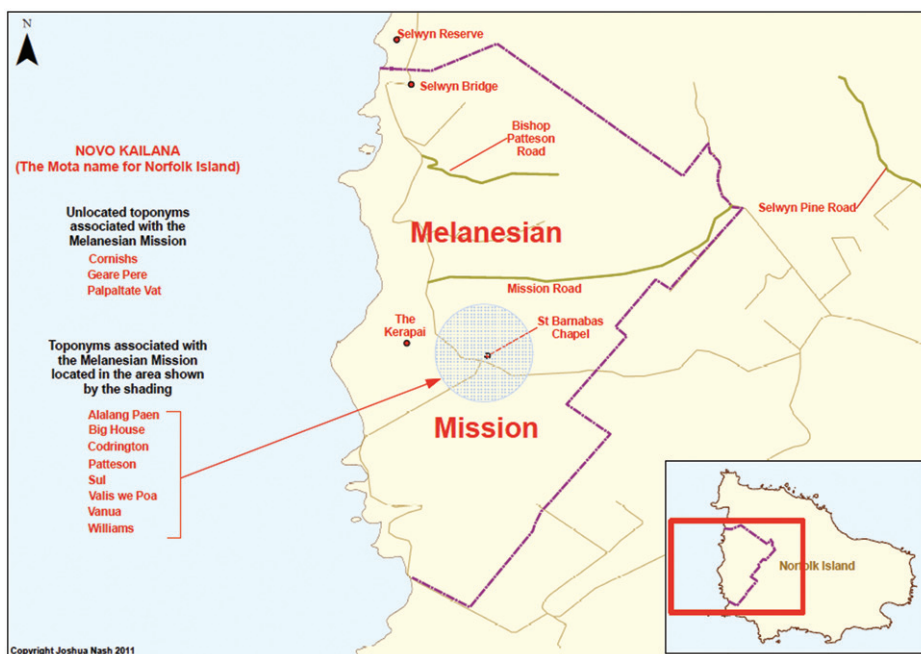


FIGURE 3: Toponymic map of the Melanesian Mission.

Source: compiled by the author from various archival sources and from Varman, *Survey Study of the First, Second and Third Settlements on Norfolk Island* and Coombe, *School-days*.

There are further names in the linguistic landscape of Norfolk Island that are associated either with the mission or with other Polynesian languages. Bishop Selwyn has been remembered in the local botanic name ‘Selwyn Pine’. The West Indian word *porpay*, which is used in Norf’k, combined with the Polynesian word *nui* and formed the house name ‘Porpaynui’ (Figure 4). This blend can be translated as ‘big (wild cherry) guava’ and, by semantic extension, possibly ‘(place of) many wild cherry guavas’.⁴⁹ Although not of Melanesian origin, the house on Two Chimneys Road, ‘Fenua Maitai’, presents a Tahitian phrase meaning ‘good land’ and memorialises Pitcairn. It was made

⁴⁹ The word *porpay*, also spelled ‘paupi’, ‘paupa’ or ‘pawpy’, has been recorded on Pitcairn Island and refers to an evergreen shrub generally one to two metres tall or a small tree up to seven metres in height. Lars-Åke Göthesson, *Plants of the Pitcairn Islands: including local names and uses* (Sydney 1997), 272. Although the tree referred to as ‘porpay’ on Norfolk Island has quite a different appearance, the descriptor has been transferred from Pitcairn to Norfolk. It should be noted that porpay are not native to Norfolk Island and are generally a pest plant. A recent description of porpay: ‘The red guava is a native of Eastern Brazil and was introduced to various Pacific Islands. On Pitcairn the word *porpieh*, *porpaye* has been recorded as referring to a cliff-side plant with red, edible berries (*Lycium sandwicense*) and has been listed as *pope*, *poppy*, *pepe*, *pawpea*, *paupea*. In English it is known as “beach creeper” or “box thorn”. The colour of its berry is bright red. The similarity of colour and taste of the red guava appears to be why it was given this name on Norfolk Island.’ Peter Mühlhäusler, Rachel Neubauer-Borg and Piria Coleman, *Ucklan’s Norf’k: words as a memory of our past* (Norfolk Island 2012), 51–52.



FIGURE 4: Porpaynui house sign showing Norf^ok–Mota language influence (photo by the author, Norfolk Island, 2007).

famous by the Reverend George Hunn Nobbs⁵⁰ in his 1850 poem describing the ‘Rock in the West’ (Pitcairn) as ‘*fenua maitai*’.⁵¹

In 1920 the Melanesian Mission station was disbanded and the buildings shipped wholesale to Siota in the Solomon Islands. Any remaining mission houses either were demolished and their materials sold for use in constructing new houses or continued to be lived in. Some examples of houses named for their connection to the mission are listed in Table 3. Taking the common Norf^ok house name form with the possessive(’s), they demonstrate how mission materials, history and names have become woven into the existing cultural fabric of Norfolk

⁵⁰ For a detailed account of George Hunn Nobbs, see Raymond Nobbs, *George Hunn Nobbs, 1799–1884: chaplain on Pitcairn and Norfolk Island* (Norfolk Island 1984). He was a schoolteacher and pastor, born 16 Oct. 1799 in Ireland. He worked in the British navy from age 12, and in 1813 he was appointed to the storeship *Indefatigable*, in which he visited New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land. In 1822, Nobbs returned to England at his mother’s request, and before her death later that year, she urged him to settle in some remote part of the world where the wrong done to her would be forgotten; her dying injunction was, ‘Go to Pitcairn Island, my son, dwell there, and the blessing of God rest upon you’. After a period in the merchant service, Nobbs landed on Pitcairn 5 Nov. 1828, where he continued to live until the entire Pitcairn population was relocated to Norfolk Island. Although Norfolk was a disappointment to many of the newly arrived Pitcairners, Nobbs’s exhortations and example prevented all but a few from returning to Pitcairn. He continued his former work as pastor and teacher until 1859, and from about 1870, with increasing age and deafness, Nobbs gradually took a less active part in community life. He died at Norfolk Island 5 Nov. 1884, leaving a widow, 10 children, 65 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren.

⁵¹ John Emery, ‘Norfolk Island: a place of extremist punishment, and *Fenua Maitai*’, *Heritage Australia*, 4 (1985), 5–11.

Island. As a result, while the mission relates to the people and places of the ‘Melanesian Mission period’ (1867–1920),⁵² it is also connected to what followed historically and toponymically on the island. Thus the rigid periodisation in some accounts of the island’s history is not necessarily reflected in its toponymic history.⁵³ The well-known historical accounts about Norfolk Island and the mission typically do not incorporate the importance of the more-than-fifty-year presence of the mission on the relationship between land use and place-naming.⁵⁴ Historical analysis of people and house names from Varman shows that the mission is remembered through a continuation of naming, re-creation of landscape using recycled mission materials and historical information, and a strong blurring of the boundaries of Norfolk Island’s historical periods.⁵⁵

Although several secondary sources concerning the mission’s social history, structure, languages and language policy on Norfolk Island exist and have been cited in this paper, the scarcity of published historical and cartographic data specifically documenting the linguistic heritage of Melanesian Mission place names is evident. Nor did archival research discover much data. Because Pidgin

TABLE 3. Other houses from Varman associated with the Melanesian Mission

Name	History
1. Lizzie Carr’s	‘The original house was built around 1909/1910 by members of the Carr family of the Melanesian Mission. The first owners were Alex Carr, a saddler and leather worker, and his wife Elizabeth Carr née Christian. She received land from her father Ephraim Christian in January 1909. The home became a guest house for some years. The home was left to the Carr’s [sic] son, John, who eventually sold the house and land to Mr Anderson who sold it to the present owner.’ ⁵⁶
2. William Kendall’s	‘This area was the site of Kendall’s cottage and outbuildings. William Kendall was sent out to the Island in the service of the Melanesian Mission in 1867 as a carpenter. He lived at the Mission until about 1891, when he was given notice.’ ⁵⁷
3. Dave Bailey’s	‘Although it is said that the house was built around 1920 by Charles and Herbert Bailey, the style and some of the details appear to be much earlier. It may be possible that the materials or even substantial portions of the house were built from materials taken from the Melanesian Mission when the buildings were auctioned in 1920.’ ⁵⁸

⁵² See for example, Rickard, ‘Norfolk Island’, 481.

⁵³ For a strong emphasis on the demarcation of historical periods, see for example, Nobbs, *Norfolk Island*, 1–5.

⁵⁴ See fn. 3.

⁵⁵ Varman, *Survey Study*, 85–86, 156–57, 260–61.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 85–86. Although Varman’s wording here suggests that the Carr family were possibly missionaries, this was not the case.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 260–61. It appears the information provided by Varman is not entirely correct. Other missionary records indicate that he worked on the mission until 1898.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 156–57.

English was suppressed throughout the mission's proselytising while pidgins and contact languages were generally looked down upon by Christian missions in the Pacific,⁵⁹ it would seem unlikely that Melanesian place-naming was encouraged and even less likely that these names would have been recorded. People may have felt some reluctance to record Mota names such as 'Kerapai' for what was locally known as 'Mission Pool'. While some of the place names that have been preserved in published accounts or archival sources suggest that Pidgin- or Melanesian-language names or Melanesian-language structures were probably used to name other places too, much must be left to speculation.

Fieldwork also found little trace of Melanesian place names. This may suggest that these were seldom used, let alone remembered by the Norfolk Islanders. While memories are fading fast and few Norfolk Islanders had even been born when the mission station was abandoned in 1920, it seems likely that mission names and their uses occupied a distinct domain of social life on Norfolk Island – quite separate from the Pitcairners' despite a degree of interaction between them and the mission population.⁶⁰ Since Norf'k speakers were aware of the strong social stigma associated with speaking Norf'k, which came to be known as 'breaking the King's crown',⁶¹ Norf'k speakers were also unlikely to embrace a comparably stigmatised 'jargon' or 'patois'. Additional reasons why Pitcairners might have been reluctant to learn the ways that the mission had come to name places can be conjectured – including their residual resentment at the mission's intrusion. Moreover, a corpus of well-known English colonial names had already been established during the two prior eras of convict settlement, which would have been common knowledge to both the mission and the Pitcairners.

By analysing place names, the research project on which this paper is based had set out to assess the influence of languages other than English and Norf'k on the linguistic landscape of Norfolk Island. Although some mission names do appear on (generally handwritten) maps, the majority of public and locally known place names associated with the Melanesian Mission are eponymous, such as 'Selwyn Pine Reserve' and 'Bishop Patteson Road'. These names adhere to a colonial naming system not generally employed by the Norfolk

⁵⁹ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 5–6, 34. See also Codrington's comment, quoted in his letter to Hugo Schuchardt dated 10 Jan. 1884 (fn. 16).

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Elwyn H. Flint 'The language of Norfolk Island' in Alan S.C. Ross and A.W. Moverley (eds), *The Pitcairnese Language* (London 1964), 209. Under the entry for 'king', in international phonetic script Flint translates 'you breakin' da King's crown' as 'you're speaking bad English'. The term 'bad English' on Norfolk Island is inevitably linked with the speaking of Norf'k: 'This jargon, which is the everyday medium of conversation between the islanders – adults as well as children – is in no respect a language. It is not even a "patois". It is said to be a mixture of English and Tahitian. As a matter of fact it is bad English, spoken by the Bounty men and imperfectly imitated by the Tahitians'. Inspector Reay, Report, Norfolk Island Public School, 30 May 1912, 'Education on Norfolk Island', box 4, folder 12, Flint Collection, Fryer Library, University of Queensland, Brisbane.

Islanders but common during the two periods of penal settlement – for example, ‘Creswell Bay’ and ‘Point Ross’, both named after British dignitaries. In the light of findings, the influence of Melanesian Mission place names seems modest. Yet what has been presented may provide impetus for scholars interested in linguistic history to assess the role of Christian missions in place-naming elsewhere in the Pacific.

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